

 John 13:1-17

05/24/2020

Teachers Dig In**Dig In to the Bible**

- Read: John 13:1-17
- In This Passage: Jesus shows an example of service when he washes his disciples' feet. Although Peter protests at first, he lets Jesus wash his feet. This is a lowly job, and yet Jesus does it. He tells his disciples to follow his example and serve others.
- Bible Point: Jesus is servant-hearted...
- Application: ...so we serve others.
- Summary Verse: "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *Jesus is servant-hearted*. It's one thing to serve by doing something you enjoy anyway. But Jesus took on the role of a servant, even though he seemed too important to do that. Help kids humble themselves and realize that no job is too gross or too low for them to do as an act of service.
- Think About: Who has served you recently? Thank God for those people!

Dig In to Prayer

- Ask Jesus to give you a servant heart like his as you teach the kids in your class.

Quick Tip

- You may have some special servants in your children's ministry: teenagers! If you serve with teenagers, help them feel important. Find out how they'd like to take a more active role in teaching. Write them notes of appreciation when you see them doing well. By encouraging them in their service, you'll help them build lifelong servant hearts.

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids get their feet washed and find a way to serve others.

Supplies

- Bible
- hand-sanitizing wipes

Easy Prep

- Make sure your adult or teen helpers are prepared to help you wash feet without explaining anything to kids.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids touch each other's feet as they pray.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids serve partners in a shoe-finding relay.

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



CRAFT

Kids make a foot scrub they can use to clean others' feet.

Supplies

- sandwich-size resealable plastic bags (1 per child)
- permanent markers (in a variety of colors)
- sugar (¼ cup per child)
- vegetable oil (1 tablespoon per child)
- lemon essential oil (2 drops per child)
- measuring cups and spoons
- disposable bowls (1 per child)
- disposable spoons (1 per child)

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids try to balance items on a serving tray.

Supplies

- large serving trays (1 for every 4 kids) (check your church kitchen or find inexpensive trays in discount dollar stores)
- tall plastic cups (2 per person)
- tennis balls (2 per person) (you could use any similar-size balls)
- upbeat music (optional)

- music player (optional)



OBJECT LESSON

Kids build inverted pyramids with classroom blocks.

Supplies

- blocks in at least 3 different sizes (an assortment for each trio)



DEEPER BIBLE

Kids dig in to how to serve people they don't want to serve.

Supplies

- Bibles
- snacks
- wet wipes or other way to clean hands

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids give a side hug to two friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids hop on one foot while they sing “Happy Birthday.”
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’re going to learn that Jesus is servant-hearted, so we serve others.**

Share

- Tell kids whether you’d rather serve by cleaning all the church bathrooms once or taking the church trash out to the dumpster every week for a year. Explain your answer.
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to choose which of those ways they’d rather serve and why.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to share with the whole group.

Summarize

Open a Bible to John 13, and say: **Those both sound like gross jobs, but they’re important ways to serve! Jesus showed his servant heart when he served in a gross but important way, too. Let’s find out more in the Bible. The Bible isn’t like other books; it’s God’s special book. The Bible is one way God shows us his servant heart. As we read his Word today, let’s see how he changes our hearts. Let’s praise him for showing us how to serve.**

Pray, praising Jesus for being a servant.



Supplies

- Bible
- hand-sanitizing wipes

Easy Prep

- Make sure your adult or teen helpers are prepared to help you wash feet without explaining anything to kids.

Tip

- It's especially important this week not to do any blocks other than Welcome or Music Videos before Core Bible Discovery so kids will be surprised when you start washing their feet.

Wash Feet

Have kids take off their shoes, but don't explain why.

Ask: • **Tell a partner about your least favorite chore.** As kids share, go around with hand-sanitizing wipes and begin washing kids' feet, without explanation. If you have adult or teen helpers, they can help wash feet as well. Be sure to use a new wipe for each child.

When everyone's feet are clean, lead kids in this discussion.

Ask: • **How did you feel when we started to wash your feet?**

• **Did you want someone to wash your feet? Why or why not?**

Say: **In our Bible story today, Jesus washed his disciples' feet. He knew he was going to die on the cross soon, and he wanted to serve his friends. That's because Jesus is servant-hearted. Let's see how one of the disciples felt about that.**

Read John 13:4-9.

Ask: • **How does Peter's reaction compare with yours?**

Say: **It might've felt a little strange or confusing when we just started washing your feet. Maybe it felt that way for the disciples, too.**

You see, Jesus was their leader, their teacher. Washing feet was a yucky job that servants did. Someone as important as Jesus would *never* do that kind of job.

Ask: • **What chores did you tell your partner about earlier? What makes them yucky?**

• **What are some chores your parents do that are yucky jobs?**

Say: **Nobody likes cleaning the toilet or picking up dirty underwear. But Jesus did a gross, lowly job of washing feet to show that he's servant-hearted. And he was making an important point.**

Serve Others

Read John 13:12-15.

Ask: • **Why do you think Jesus served the disciples instead of just telling them to serve others?**

Say: **Jesus is servant-hearted, so we serve others. Jesus *showed* us how to serve instead of just talking about serving. Jesus wants us to know that there's no job too gross for us to do to serve someone. There's no task we're too important to do. No matter who you are, you can serve others!**

Since Jesus wants us to follow his example, let's do that now!

Have kids form groups of four.

Say: **Your group has two minutes to think of a way to serve others. It has to be something you can do right now, and you have to be able to finish it in five minutes. You'll have two minutes to think of an idea and five minutes to do it.** Set any parameters of where kids are allowed to go. Depending on your security policies, they may have to serve within your room, within the children's wing, or without going outside. Make sure kids understand those restrictions.

After two minutes for planning, allow five minutes for kids to serve. Then gather everyone back together.

Ask: • **What did your group do to serve?**

• **What was it like to think of a way to serve and then do it right away?**

Say: Jesus is servant-hearted, so we serve others. When we serve others like you just did, we reflect Jesus' heart.



Foot Prayers

Pray for Each Other

Say: **In our Bible story, Jesus served his disciples by washing their feet. Let's serve each other by praying for each other. We'll do it in a way that reminds us of the Bible story.**

- Have kids each find a partner of the same gender. If you have an uneven number of kids, be a partner, too.
- Have pairs sit facing each other with their feet outstretched so each partner's feet is next to the other partner's hips.
- Have partners share prayer requests.
- Have kids take turns putting their hands on each other's feet and praying for their partners.

Wrap Up

Pray: **Jesus, thank you for your servant heart! Help us reflect your heart as we serve others. In your name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

If the Shoe Fits

[10 min]

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Help a Partner Put on Shoes

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus is servant-hearted. In Bible times, washing feet was something servants did, but Jesus did it for his friends. Jesus put his friends before himself. Let's play a game where you'll do the same!**

- Have all the kids take off their shoes and gather them in a big, mixed-up pile in the center of the room.
- Form pairs, and then have pairs join with two or three other pairs to create teams.
- Teams can sit in single-file lines, with partners sitting next to each other, about 15 feet away from the pile of shoes in the center of the room.
- At your cue, the first pair in each line will run to the shoe pile. One partner will describe to the other partner what his or her shoes look like while the other partner searches. Partners can't simply point out their shoes or use any other gestures; they have to describe them.
- Once a correct shoe is found, the searching partner will put the shoe on his or her partner's foot and then the pair can run back to their team line and tag the next pair.
- Pairs will take turns running to the shoe pile to find and put on each other's shoes one shoe at a time until everyone on the team has his or her shoes back on.
- Encourage teams to work as fast as they can to keep the energy level up.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music in the background while teams relay.
- If time allows, you can play new rounds of the game with different partners and teams.

Talk About It

Ask: • **How did you serve each other in the game?**

• **What are ways kids can serve others in real life?** Share an example of your own, such as helping a neighbor catch up on yardwork or making a meal for a family in need.

Say: **Jesus is servant-hearted, so we serve others. When we serve others, we show them Jesus' servant heart at work in us.**

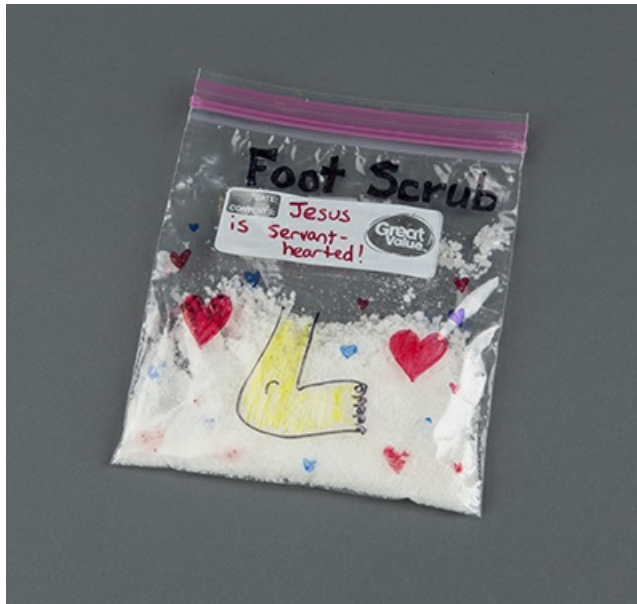


Supplies

- sandwich-size resealable plastic bags (1 per child)
- permanent markers (in a variety of colors)
- sugar (¼ cup per child)
- vegetable oil (1 tablespoon per child)
- lemon essential oil (2 drops per child)
- measuring cups and spoons
- disposable bowls (1 per child)
- disposable spoons (1 per child)

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Make Foot Scrub

Show kids the sample craft you made. Give each child a resealable plastic bag, a bowl, and a spoon. Set out the remaining supplies to share, and have kids follow these directions to make foot scrub.

- First decorate your bag! Use the permanent markers to add some flair, and don't forget to write the point: Jesus is servant-hearted.
- In your bowl, mix your foot scrub. You'll need ¼ cup of sugar, 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil, and two drops of lemon oil.
- Stir the foot scrub well, and then scoop it into your bag. It's a good idea to have a friend hold the bag open while you scoop it in.
- Seal the bag, and decide who you'll serve with your foot scrub!

Talk About It

Ask: • **Who's someone whose feet you could clean using your foot scrub?**

• **Describe a foot you wouldn't want to scrub—no names!**

Say: **Jesus is servant-hearted, so we serve others.** That means serving people even if they have smelly, hairy, warty feet! This week, use your foot scrub to serve your friends and family. Get a basin of water, and wash their feet using the scrub and then soap. Make sure to use fresh water for each person!

Have kids take their Serving Scrub home and use it to serve their friends and families as they share about how Jesus is servant-hearted.



Serve Steady

Supplies

- large serving trays (1 for every 4 kids) (check your church kitchen or find inexpensive trays in discount dollar stores)
- tall plastic cups (2 per person)
- tennis balls (2 per person) (you could use any similar-size balls)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Balance Cups on Trays

Say: **Today we heard about a unique way Jesus served his friends, the disciples, by washing their feet. We might not think of that as a way to serve others today, but back then it probably meant a lot to Jesus' friends. Let's play a game about serving in a way that's more common in our time.**

- Form teams of four, and give each team a tray, eight cups, and eight tennis balls.
- Have each team line up single file about 15 feet away from a wall.
- Have the first person in each line pick up the tray and add a cup. Then he or she will balance the tray so the cup doesn't topple over, walk to the opposite wall and touch it, and then head back to his or her line to pass the tray to the next person.
- Teams will continue to relay in this way, adding either a cup or a tennis ball to their trays each time. The tennis balls should be placed loose on the tray so they'll roll around.
- As items are added, keeping the tray steady and the cups from toppling will get more difficult.
- If items on a tray topple, the child carrying the tray can reload it and continue on.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.
- When teams finish, have them reset their trays and begin a new round with a new rule of carrying and balancing the tray with only one hand.
- Then play a third round where kids must balance the trays on top of their heads. If you have time for additional rounds, let kids think of their own new challenges.

Talk About It

Say: **The kind of service you were practicing in the game is something we see more often than foot-washing. We see servers carrying trays at restaurants or big celebrations like weddings.**

Ask: • **What are other ways you've seen people serving others? It doesn't have to involve a serving tray!**

Say: **People serve others through acts of kindness, encouraging words, offering help, or spending time with others. Or they might let others go ahead of them in line, open a door for someone, or clear someone's dishes.** Share an example of a time you were served or you served someone else yourself. For example, maybe you came up short when you went to pay for groceries and the person in line behind you kindly gave you the money to make up the difference. Or maybe you made a comforting meal for a friend who was going through a hard time.

Ask: • **Tell about times you've served or been served and what it was like.**

Say: **Jesus is servant-hearted, so we serve others. When we serve others, we reflect how Jesus is shaping our hearts to be more like his.**



Supplies

- blocks in at least 3 different sizes (an assortment for each trio)

Tip

- We found that cardboard blocks worked well. Consider borrowing some from preschool classrooms.

Build Pyramids

Ask: • **Have you ever seen cheerleaders make a pyramid? How many people are usually at the top?**

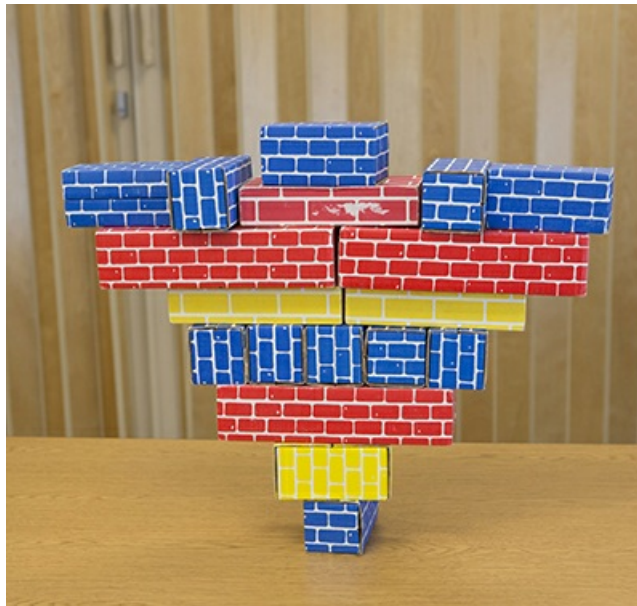
Say: **There's usually one person or brick at the top of a pyramid. Let's see if you can work together to build a pyramid in under 60 seconds. There needs to be one block on top.**

- Form trios.
- Give each trio a pile of blocks, making sure they have at least three different sizes to work with.
- On "go," have each trio use the blocks to build a pyramid in under 60 seconds.

Build an Inverted Pyramid

Say: **That wasn't too difficult. But what if we turn things upside down—literally! This time, I challenge you to build an inverted pyramid. That means only one block is at the bottom and the levels get wider the higher you get.**

- Since it's a little more challenging, tell trios they'll have five minutes to build an inverted pyramid. Each trio's pyramid needs to have at least six levels.
- Have kids work together to build an inverted pyramid. Offer encouragement, and frequently update them on time remaining.
- After five minutes, celebrate all the trios' accomplishments.



Talk About It

Ask: • **Compare the first pyramid you built with the second one. What was different about building them?**

- **How do our inverted pyramids show you what it means to be a servant?**

Say: **When we serve, we put other people above ourselves. It's like an inverted pyramid. Jesus is servant-hearted. Jesus is God! Yet he was willing to get down on his knees and serve his friends by**

washing their feet. He put their needs above his own.

**What if I Don't Want to Serve Certain People?**

Supplies

- Bibles
- snacks
- wet wipes or other way to clean hands

Serve Each Other

- Have kids clean their hands.
- Have kids form two groups.
- Choose one group to be the first Servants. The Servants will each get a snack to serve to someone in the other group.
- While the Servants get the snacks, tell the other group to find as much as possible to whine and complain about when the Servants give them the snacks.
- After the first group of Servants serves the snacks, have the second group become the Servants and give snacks to the first group. Tell the group being served to brag about all the ways they did a better job when they were the Servants.

Ask: • **How did you feel when you got those responses while serving?**

• **After the response you got while serving, would you want to serve those people again?**

Explain.

Say: **In our story, Jesus washed *all* the disciples' feet. That means he washed a guy named Judas' feet, even though he knew Judas was plotting to turn Jesus in to people who wanted to have him killed! Yikes! I know I'd have a hard time serving someone like that!**

So what if we don't want to serve certain people? Let's dig in to that.

Dig Deeper

Ask: • **What are some reasons you might not want to serve someone?** Remind kids to give reasons, not names—for example, someone who has said mean things to them, smells bad, is different from them, is a stranger, or is old. It might be a sibling or a stepparent they don't always get along with.

Say: **Now, keeping the name to yourself, think of someone you wouldn't want to serve. Picture that person in your head.** Pause. **Let's see what the Bible says about serving.**

Have a child read John 13:15.

Say: **Jesus washed feet as an example for us to follow.**

Ask: • **How do you feel about following that example?**

Say: **Our next passage talks about slaves serving their masters. Let me make sure you understand that this isn't saying slavery is okay. It was just instructions for people who *were* slaves, since that unfortunately wasn't going to change for them.**

Have a child read Ephesians 6:5-8.

Ask: • **What are some reasons a slave might *not* want to serve a master?**

• **What can you learn from how this verse tells slaves to act?**

Say: **Slaves didn't get anything for their service. Earlier when you served, you got complaints or bragging in response. But serving as if we're serving Jesus isn't about *who* we're serving. It doesn't matter how they respond to us because it's not about what we can get out of it.**

It's not just slaves who can serve people as if they're serving Jesus. That's an instruction for all of us!

Have a child read Colossians 3:23-24.

Ask: • **Think of the person you pictured earlier. How would it change the way you serve that person if you pictured Jesus while you serve him or her?**

Say: **Close your eyes and picture the person you pictured earlier. Take some time to pray silently for that person, and ask Jesus to give you a servant heart like his toward that person.** Pause, allowing time for prayer.

Say: **Jesus is servant-hearted, so we serve others. Unless it's unsafe for you to serve someone, it's great to look for ways to serve anyone, imagining that person is Jesus! It might be a small gesture**

rather than a planned service project. Maybe you're visiting your great-grandmother in a nursing home and you see an empty cup on her nightstand. You could fill it with water! When we don't put limits on *who* we serve, we can look for ways to serve like Jesus no matter what we're doing. This week, look for unexpected ways to serve people...even if they're not people you want to serve.

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